

(3) Providing for authority to designate different handler payment and reporting schedules to recognize differences in marketing practices and procedures.

(4) Providing that the Honey Board may convene from time to time working groups drawn from producers, honey handlers, importers, exporters, members of the wholesale or retail outlets for honey, or other members of the public to assist in the development of research and marketing programs for honey.

(5) Providing for authority to accumulate reserve funds from assessments collected pursuant to this chapter to permit an effective and continuous coordinated program of research, promotion, and consumer information, in years when the production and assessment income may be reduced, but the total reserve fund may not exceed the amount budgeted for one year's operation.

(6) Providing for the authority to use funds collected under this chapter with the approval of the Secretary for the development and expansion of honey and honey product sales in foreign markets.

(7) Providing for terms and conditions incidental to, and not inconsistent with, the terms and conditions specified in this chapter and necessary to effectuate the other provisions of such an order.

(8) If approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, providing authority for the development of programs and related rules and regulations that will, with the approval of the Secretary, establish minimum purity standards for honey and honey products that are designed to maintain a positive and wholesome marketing image for honey and honey products.

(b) Inspection and monitoring system

(1) Inspection

Any program, rule, or regulation under subsection (a)(8) of this section may provide for the inspection, by the Secretary, of honey and honey products being sold for domestic consumption in, or for export from, the United States.

(2) Monitoring system

The Honey Board may develop and recommend to the Secretary a system for monitoring the purity of honey and honey products being sold for domestic consumption in, or for export from, the United States, including a system for identifying adulterated honey.

(3) Coordination with other Federal agencies

The Secretary may coordinate, to the maximum extent practicable, with the head of any other Federal agency that has authority to ensure compliance with labeling or other requirements relating to the purity of honey and honey products concerning an enforcement action against any person that does not comply with a rule or regulation issued by any other Federal agency concerning the labeling or purity requirements of honey and honey products.

(4) Authority to issue regulations

The Secretary may issue such rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out this subsection.

(c) Voluntary quality assurance program

(1) In general

In addition to or independent of any program, rule, or regulation under subsection (b) of this section, the Honey Board, with the approval of the Secretary, may establish and carry out a voluntary quality assurance program concerning purity standards for honey and honey products.

(2) Components

The program may include—

(A) the establishment of an official Honey Board seal of approval to be displayed on honey and honey products of producers, handlers, and importers that participate in the voluntary program and are found to meet such standards of purity as are established under the program;

(B) actions to encourage producers, handlers, and importers to participate in the program;

(C) actions to encourage consumers to purchase honey and honey products bearing the official seal of approval; and

(D) periodic inspections by the Secretary, or other parties approved by the Secretary, of honey and honey products of producers, handlers, and importers that participate in the voluntary program.

(3) Display of seal of approval

To be eligible to display the official seal of approval established under paragraph (2)(A) on a honey or honey product, a producer, handler, or importer shall participate in the voluntary program under this subsection.

(d) Authority of Secretary

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, the Secretary shall have the authority to approve or disapprove the establishment of minimum purity standards, the inspection and monitoring system under subsection (b) of this section, and the voluntary quality assurance program under subsection (c) of this section.

(Pub. L. 98-590, § 8, Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 3119; Pub. L. 105-185, title VI, § 605(g), June 23, 1998, 112 Stat. 596.)

AMENDMENTS

1998—Pub. L. 105-185 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a), inserted heading, and added par. (8) and subsecs. (b) to (d).

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 4606 of this title.

§ 4608. Collection of assessments; refunds

(a) Handlers

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a first handler of honey shall be responsible, at the time of first purchase—

(1) for the collection, and payment to the Honey Board, of the assessment payable by a producer under section 4606(e)(2)(A) of this

title or, if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(i) of this title; and

(2) if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, for the payment to the Honey Board of an additional assessment payable by the handler under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(ii) of this title.

(b) Records

The first handler shall maintain a separate record on each producer's honey so handled, including honey owned by the handler.

(c) Importers

Except as otherwise provided in this section, at the time of entry of honey and honey products into the United States, an importer shall remit to the Honey Board through the United States Customs Service—

(1) the assessment on the imported honey and honey products required under section 4606(e)(2)(B) of this title; or

(2) if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, the assessment on the imported honey and honey products required under section 4606(e)(3)(B) of this title, of which the amount payable under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(ii) of this title represents the assessment due from the handler to be paid by the importer on behalf of the handler.

(d) Loan and loan deficiency payments; deduction from disbursement of loan funds or loan deficiency payment made to producer

In any case in which a loan, or a loan deficiency payment is made with respect to honey under the honey price support loan program established under the Agricultural Act of 1949 [7 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.], or successor statute, the Secretary shall provide for the assessment to be deducted from the disbursement of any loan funds or from the loan deficiency payment made to the producer and for the amount of such assessment to be forwarded to the Honey Board. The Secretary shall provide for the producer to receive a statement of the amount of the assessment deducted from the loan funds or loan deficiency payment promptly after each occasion when an assessment is deducted from any such loan funds or payment under this subsection.

(e) Producer-packers

Except as otherwise provided in this section, a producer-packer shall be responsible for the collection, and payment to the Honey Board, of—

(1) the assessment payable by the producer-packer under section 4606(e)(2)(A) of this title or, if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(i) of this title on honey produced by the producer-packer;

(2) at the time of first purchase, the assessment payable by a producer under section 4606(e)(2)(A) of this title or, if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(i) of this title on honey purchased by the producer-packer as a first handler; and

(3) if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, an additional assessment payable by the producer-packer under section 4606(e)(3)(A)(ii) of this title.

(f) Inspection; books and records

(1) In general

To make available to the Secretary and the Honey Board such information and data as are necessary to carry out this chapter (including an order or regulation issued under this chapter), a handler, importer, producer, or producer-packer responsible for payment of an assessment under this chapter, and a person receiving an exemption from an assessment under section 4606(e)(4) of this title, shall—

(A) maintain and make available for inspection by the Secretary and the Honey Board such books and records as are required by the order and regulations issued under this chapter; and

(B) file reports at the times, in the manner, and having the content prescribed by the order and regulations, which reports shall include the total number of bee colonies maintained, the quantity of honey produced, and the quantity of honey and honey products handled or imported.

(2) Employee or agent

To conduct an inspection or review a report of a handler, importer, producer, or producer-packer under paragraph (1), an individual shall be an employee or agent of the Department or the Honey Board, and shall not be a member or alternate member of the Honey Board.

(3) Confidentiality

An employee or agent described in paragraph (2) shall be subject to the confidentiality requirements of subsection (g) of this section.

(g) Confidentiality of information; disclosure

(1) In general

All information obtained under subsection (f) of this section shall be kept confidential by all officers, employees, and agents of the Department or of the Honey Board.

(2) Disclosure

Information subject to paragraph (1) may be disclosed—

(A) only in a suit or administrative hearing brought at the request of the Secretary, or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party, that involves the order with respect to which the information was furnished or acquired; and

(B) only if the Secretary determines that the information is relevant to the suit or administrative hearing.

(3) Exceptions

Nothing in this subsection prohibits—

(A) the issuance of general statements based on the reports of a number of handlers subject to an order, if the statements do not identify the information furnished by any person; or

(B) the publication, by direction of the Secretary, of the name of any person that violates any order issued under this chapter, together with a statement of the particular provisions of the order violated by the person.

(4) Violation

Any person that knowingly violates this subsection, on conviction—

- (A) shall be fined not more than \$1,000, imprisoned not more than 1 year, or both; and
- (B) if the person is an officer or employee of the Honey Board or the Department, shall be removed from office.

(h) Administration and remittance

Administration and remittance of the assessments under this chapter shall be conducted—

- (1) in the manner prescribed in the order and regulations issued under this chapter; and
- (2) if approved in a referendum conducted under this chapter, in a manner that ensures that all honey and honey products are assessed a total of, but not more than, \$0.015 per pound, including any producer or importer assessment.

(i) Liability for assessments

(1) Producers

If a first handler or the Secretary fails to collect an assessment from a producer under this section, the producer shall be responsible for the payment of the assessment to the Honey Board.

(2) Importers

If the United States Customs Service fails to collect an assessment from an importer or an importer fails to pay an assessment at the time of entry of honey and honey products into the United States under this section, the importer shall be responsible for the remission of the assessment to the Honey Board.

(Pub. L. 98-590, § 9, Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 3120; Pub. L. 101-624, title XIX, § 1984(b), Nov. 28, 1990, 104 Stat. 3906; Pub. L. 102-237, title VIII, § 807(1), Dec. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1883; Pub. L. 104-127, title V, § 591, Apr. 4, 1996, 110 Stat. 1084; Pub. L. 105-185, title VI, § 605(h), June 23, 1998, 112 Stat. 597.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

The Agricultural Act of 1949, referred to in subsec. (d), is act Oct. 31, 1949, ch. 792, 63 Stat. 1051, as amended, which is classified principally to chapter 35A (§ 1421 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 1421 of this title and Tables.

AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(1)(A), added subsec. (a) and struck out former subsec. (a) which read as follows: “Except as provided by subsections (c), (d), (e), and (i) of this section, the first handler of honey shall be responsible for the collection from the producer, and payment to the Honey Board, of assessments authorized by this chapter.”

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(1)(B), added subsec. (c) and struck out former subsec. (c) which read as follows: “The assessment on imported honey and honey products shall be paid by the importer at the time of entry into the United States and shall be remitted to the Honey Board.”

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(1)(C), added subsec. (e) and struck out former subsec. (e) which read as follows: “Producer-packers shall pay to the Honey Board the assessment on the honey they produce.”

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(2), added subsec. (f) and struck out former subsec. (f) which read as follows: “Handlers, importers, producers, and producer-packers responsible for payment of assessments, and persons receiving an exemption from assessments under section 4606(e)(2) of this title, shall maintain and

make available for inspection by the Secretary such books and records as are required by the order and file reports at the times, in the manner, and having the content prescribed by the order, so that information and data shall be made available to the Honey Board and to the Secretary which is appropriate or necessary to the effectuation, administration, or enforcement of the chapter or of any order or regulation issued pursuant to this chapter.”

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(3), added subsec. (g) and struck out former subsec. (g) which read as follows: “All information obtained pursuant to subsection (f) of this section shall be kept confidential by all officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and of the Honey Board. Only such information as the Secretary deems relevant shall be disclosed and only in a suit or administrative hearing brought at the request of the Secretary or to which the Secretary or any officer of the United States is a party involving the order with reference to which the information was furnished or acquired. Nothing in this section prohibits—

“(1) issuance of general statements based upon the reports of a number of handlers subject to any order, if such statements do not identify the information furnished by any person; or

“(2) the publication by direction of the Secretary, of the name of any person violating any order issued under this chapter, together with a statement of the particular provisions of the order violated by such person.”

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(4), (5), added subsec. (h) and struck out former subsec. (h) which read as follows: “(h)(1)(A) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), any producer or importer may obtain a refund of the assessment collected from the producer or importer if demand is made within the time and in the manner prescribed by the Honey Board and approved by the Secretary; except that, during any year, the amount of refunds made to an importer, as a percentage of total assessments collected from such importer, shall not exceed the amount of refunds made to domestic producers, as a percentage of total assessments collected from such producers. Such refund shall be made by the Honey Board in June and December of each year.

“(B) A producer that has obtained a honey price support loan under the Agricultural Act of 1949, or successor statute, may obtain a refund if the producer has submitted to the Honey Board the statement received under subsection (d) of this section of the amount of assessment deducted from the loan funds and has otherwise complied with this subsection, even though the loan with respect to which the assessment was collected may still be outstanding and final settlement has not been made.

“(2) With respect to the order in effect on November 28, 1990, following the referendum on such order required under section 4612(b)(2) of this title, a producer or importer may obtain a refund of an assessment under such order as provided in paragraph (1) only if the Secretary determines that the proposal to terminate refunds under the order is defeated in such referendum.”

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 105-185, § 605(h)(6), inserted subsec. heading, designated existing provisions as par. (1), inserted par. heading, and added par. (2).

1996—Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 104-127 inserted “producers,” after “importers.”

1991—Subsec. (h)(1)(A). Pub. L. 102-237 inserted “to” before “an importer”.

1990—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 101-624, § 1984(b)(1), inserted reference to subsec. (i) of this section.

Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 101-624, § 1984(b)(2), amended subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (d) read as follows: “In any case in which a loan is made with respect to any honey under the Honey Loan Price Support Program, the Secretary shall provide that the assessment shall be deducted from the proceeds of the loan and that the amount of such assessment shall be forwarded to the Honey Board. When such loan is re-

deemed, the Secretary shall provide the producer with proof of payment of the assessment."

Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 101-624, §1984(b)(3), inserted ", and persons receiving an exemption from assessments under section 4606(e)(2) of this title," after "payment of assessments".

Subsec. (h). Pub. L. 101-624, §1984(b)(4), designated existing provisions as par. (1)(A); substituted "Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), any" for "Any", "an importer" for "to importers", and "from such importer" for "from importers"; added subpar. (B); and added par. (2).

Subsec. (i). Pub. L. 101-624, §1984(b)(5), added subsec. (i).

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in sections 4606, 4607, 4612 of this title.

§ 4609. Petition and review

(a) Filing of petition; hearing

(1) In general

Subject to paragraph (4), a person subject to an order may file a written petition with the Secretary—

(A) that states that the order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order is not in accordance with law; and

(B) that requests—

(i) a modification of the order, provision, or obligation; or

(ii) to be exempted from the order, provision, or obligation.

(2) Hearing

In accordance with regulations issued by the Secretary, the petitioner shall be given an opportunity for a hearing on the petition.

(3) Ruling

After the hearing, the Secretary shall make a ruling on the petition that shall be final, if in accordance with law.

(4) Statute of limitations

A petition filed under this subsection that challenges an order, any provision of the order, or any obligation imposed in connection with the order, shall be filed not later than 2 years after the later of—

(A) the effective date of the order, provision, or obligation challenged in the petition; or

(B) the date on which the petitioner became subject to the order, provision, or obligation challenged in the petition.

(b) District court; jurisdiction; review; rulings

The district courts of the United States in any district in which such person is an inhabitant, or carries on business, are hereby vested with jurisdiction to review such ruling, provided a complaint for that purpose is filed within twenty days from the date of the entry of such ruling. Service of process in such proceedings may be had upon the Secretary by delivering to the Secretary a copy of the complaint. If the court determines that such ruling is not in accordance with law, it shall remand such proceedings to the Secretary with directions either (1) to make such ruling as the court shall determine to be in accordance with law, or (2) to take such further

proceedings as, in its opinion, the law requires. The pendency of proceedings instituted pursuant to subsection (a) of this section shall not impede, hinder, or delay the United States or the Secretary from obtaining relief pursuant to section 4610 of this title.

(Pub. L. 98-590, §10, Oct. 30, 1984, 98 Stat. 3121; Pub. L. 105-185, title VI, §605(i), June 23, 1998, 112 Stat. 599.)

AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 105-185 added subsec. (a) and struck out former subsec. (a) which read as follows: "Any person subject to an order may file, within a period prescribed by the Secretary, a written petition with the Secretary, stating that such order or any provision of such order or any obligation imposed in connection therewith is not in accordance with law and requesting a modification thereof or to be exempted therefrom. Such person shall thereupon be given an opportunity for a hearing upon such petition, in accordance with regulations made by the Secretary. After such hearing, the Secretary shall make a ruling upon such petition which shall be final, if in accordance with law."

SECTION REFERRED TO IN OTHER SECTIONS

This section is referred to in section 4610a of this title.

§ 4610. Enforcement

(a) District courts; jurisdiction; Attorney General

The several district courts of the United States are vested with jurisdiction specifically to enforce, and to prevent and restrain any person from violating, any order or regulation issued under this chapter. The facts relating to any civil action authorized to be brought under this subsection shall be referred to the Attorney General for appropriate action. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as requiring the Secretary to refer to the Attorney General violations of this chapter whenever the Secretary believes that the administration and enforcement of any such order or regulation would be adequately served by administrative action under subsection (b) of this section or suitable written notice or warning to any person committing such violations.

(b) Civil penalties; notice and hearing; review; courts of appeals; cease and desist orders; failure to obey; Attorney General

(1) Any person who violates any provision of any order or regulation issued by the Secretary under this chapter, or who fails or refuses to pay, collect, or remit any assessment or fee duly required of such person thereunder, may be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary of not less than \$500 nor more than \$5,000 for each such violation. Each violation shall be a separate offense. In addition to or in lieu of such civil penalty the Secretary may issue an order requiring such person to cease and desist from continuing such violations. No penalty shall be assessed or cease and desist order issued unless such person is given notice and opportunity for a hearing before the Secretary with respect to such violation, and the order of the Secretary assessing a penalty or imposing a cease and desist order shall be final and conclusive unless the affected person files an appeal from the Secretary's order